

*'Headaches are caused by changes in the blood vessels – they either contract or expand. A small dose of caffeine from a cup of tea seems to reverse these changes.'*

JANE CLARKE, LEADING NUTRITIONIST



## Kiss and calm

Puckering up reduces our levels of the stress hormone cortisol, says a new study. According to Wendy Hill, professor of psychology at Lafayette College in the US, the physical activity of touching lips apparently sets off a series of mood-lifting chemical processes within the body. So next time you're stressed out, don't head to the fridge for comfort – give your partner a kiss and you'll both be feeling better in no time.

## See red – stay sharp!

Mind not as quick as you'd like? The colour red can enhance your attention to detail by 31%, while blue is best at helping creativity, says a new US study. 'We associate red with stop signs, traffic lights and fire engines. These signal danger, which has a stimulating effect on our bodies,' says colour therapist Juliette Standish.

'The colour blue, on the other hand, activates the release of the hormone oxytocin, which helps us to relax, so we feel safe about being creative.' Place a vase or photo frame in these shades on your desk to boost your grey matter.

## USE TEAMWORK TO MEET YOUR HEALTH GOALS

We know exercising with other people can keep us motivated – now there's a new explanation for it. A study in *Psychological Science* found activities where you mirror others' movements, such as group walking, give you an advantage. Athlete Brendan Foster, CBE, agrees: 'Group events motivate people to exercise more, and being with people with a common purpose also takes away much of the fear factor.' For help with your exercise goals, visit [www.greatactivity.org](http://www.greatactivity.org) >